

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for forming an image on a recording medium using a network, the system comprising:

a plurality of imaging devices each in communication with the network and operable for forming an image on a recording medium based on image information received via the network;

an imaging indicating device in communication with the network, the imaging indicating device outputting job information including at least image information and output device designation information via the network for designating a first imaging device included in the plurality of imaging devices; and

a plurality of imaging management devices each in communication with the network and including program logic that performs steps comprising determining whether the first imaging device is in an operable state and if so, causing an imaging job for forming an image based on the image information is executed by the first imaging device, and when it is determined that the first imaging device is not operable, a second imaging device of the same kind as the first imaging device is selected from among the plurality of imaging devices and the imaging job is executed by the second imaging device,

wherein the imaging devices, the imaging indicating device and the imaging management devices are connected by a network.

2. The system according to Claim 1, wherein the imaging management devices determine, before the imaging job is executed,

whether the first imaging device is operable.

3. The system according to Claim 2, wherein, during execution of the imaging job, the imaging management devices determines whether the first imaging device is operable.

4. The system according to Claim 1, wherein the imaging management devices store and hold performance information of the imaging devices, and when it is determined that the first imaging device is not operable, the imaging management devices mutually correct a difference of performance between the first imaging device and the second imaging device, and execute the imaging job with the second imaging device.

5. The system according to Claim 1, wherein, during execution of the imaging job by the second imaging device, the imaging management devices determine whether the first imaging device is operable, and when the first imaging device is operable, the imaging management devices control so that the imaging job is executed again by the first imaging device.

6. The system according to Claim 5, wherein the imaging management devices store and hold performance information of the plurality of imaging devices, and when it has been determined that the first imaging device is operable, the imaging management devices

interpolate the difference of performance between the first imaging device and the second imaging device, and the imaging job is executed by the first imaging device.

7. An imaging system comprising:

a plurality of imaging devices for forming, based on image information, an image on a predetermined recording medium;

an imaging indicating device for outputting job information including at least image information and output device designation information for designating a first imaging device included among the imaging devices;

a plurality of imaging management devices for controlling such that an imaging job for forming an image based on the image information is executed by the first imaging device; and

a chief imaging management device for controlling such that a first imaging management device among the plurality of imaging management devices is judged, and when it is determined that the first imaging management device is operable, the job information is transmitted to the first imaging management device, and when it is determined that the first imaging management device is not operable, a second imaging management device of the same kind as the first imaging management device is selected from among the imaging management devices, and the job information is transmitted to the second imaging management device,

wherein the imaging devices, the imaging indicating devices,

the imaging management devices, and the chief imaging management device are connected together via a network.

8. The imaging system according to Claim 7, wherein, prior to execution of the imaging job, the chief imaging management device determines whether the first imaging management device is operable.

9. The imaging system according to Claim 8, wherein, during the execution of the imaging job, the chief imaging management device determines whether the first imaging management device is operable.

10. The imaging system according to Claim 7, wherein the imaging management devices control so as to determine whether the first imaging device designated by the output device designation information is operable, and when the first imaging device is operable, an imaging job for forming an image based on the image information is executed by the first imaging device, and when the first imaging device is not operable, a second imaging device of the same kind as the first imaging device is selected from among the imaging devices, and the imaging job is executed by the second imaging device.

11. The imaging system according to Claim 10, wherein the imaging management devices determine, prior to execution of the imaging job, whether the first imaging device designated by the output device designation information is operable.

12. The imaging system according to Claim 11, wherein, during execution of the imaging job, the imaging management devices determine whether the first imaging device designated by the output device designation information is operable.

13. The imaging system according to Claim 10, wherein the imaging management devices store and hold performance information of the imaging devices, and when it is determined that the first imaging device is not operable, the imaging management devices interpolate the difference of performance between the first imaging device and the second imaging device, and execute the imaging job with the second imaging device.

14. The imaging system according to Claim 10, wherein, during execution of the imaging job by the second imaging device, the imaging management devices control so as to determine whether the first imaging device is operable, and when the first imaging device is operable, the imaging job is executed again by the first imaging device.

15. The imaging system according to Claim 14, wherein the imaging management devices store and hold performance information among the imaging devices, and when it has been determined that the first imaging device is operable, the imaging management devices interpolate the difference of performance between the first imaging

device and the second imaging device, and the imaging job is executed by the first imaging device.

16. An imaging method comprising the steps of:

(a) outputting job information including at least image information and output device designation information for designating a first imaging device included in a plurality of imaging devices;

(b) determining whether a first imaging management device among a plurality of imaging management devices is operable, and when the first imaging management device is operable, transmitting the job information to the first imaging management device, and when the first imaging management device is not operable, selecting a second imaging management device of the same kind as the first imaging management device from among the plurality of imaging management devices, and transmitting the job information to the second imaging management device; and

(c) executing, based on the image information, an imaging job for forming an image with the imaging devices.

17. The imaging method according to Claim 16, wherein the step of determining whether a first imaging management device among a plurality of imaging management devices is operable, is performed prior to the step of executing, based on the image formation, an imaging job.

18. The imaging method according to Claim 17, wherein the step of determining whether a first imaging management device among a plurality of imaging management devices is operable is performed during the step of executing, based on the image information, an imaging job.

19. The imaging method according to Claim 16, wherein the step of executing, based on the image information, an imaging job includes determining whether the first imaging device is operable, and when the first imaging device is operable, executing the imaging job for forming an image based on the image information with the first imaging device, and when the first imaging device is not operable, selecting a second imaging device of a kind the same as the first imaging device from among the plurality of imaging devices and executing the imaging job with the second imaging device.

20. The imaging method according to Claim 19, wherein when it has been determined that the first imaging device is not operable, the progress of the job or the first imaging device is determined and the second imaging device is used to complete execution of the job.

21. A system for printing an image via a network, the system comprising:

(a) a plurality of printers comprising different types with some printers being of the same type, and each printer when in an operable

state forming an image according to data received by the printer from the network;

(b) a computer which outputs image and printer designation information to the network for printing an image in accordance therewith on a printer among the plurality of printers designated in the information; and

(c) a printer server which receives the information output from the computer, the printer server including program logic that when executed performs steps including:

(i) determining via the network whether the printer designated in the information received from the computer is in an operable state;

(ii) choosing the designated printer for printing the image if the designated printer is in an operable state;

(iii) if the designated printer is not in an operable state, determining via the network if another printer of the same type as the designated printer is in an operable state and if so, choosing the another printer for printing the image; and

(iv) converting information received from the computer to image data in a format suitable for the chosen printer to print an image corresponding to the image information from the computer and outputting the data via the network to the chosen printer.

22. The system according to Claim 21, further comprising another printer server and a management server, the management server



receiving via the network information output from the computer, wherein the information output from the computer includes printer server designation information, the management server including program logic that when executed performs steps comprising:

(a) determining via the network whether the printer server designated in the information received from the computer is in an operable state;

(b) choosing the designated printer server for receiving the information from the computer if the designated printer server is in an operable state;

(c) if the designated printer server is not in an operable state, determining via the network if another printer server is in an operable state and if so, choosing the another printer server; and

(d) passing control of the information received from the computer to the chosen printer server.